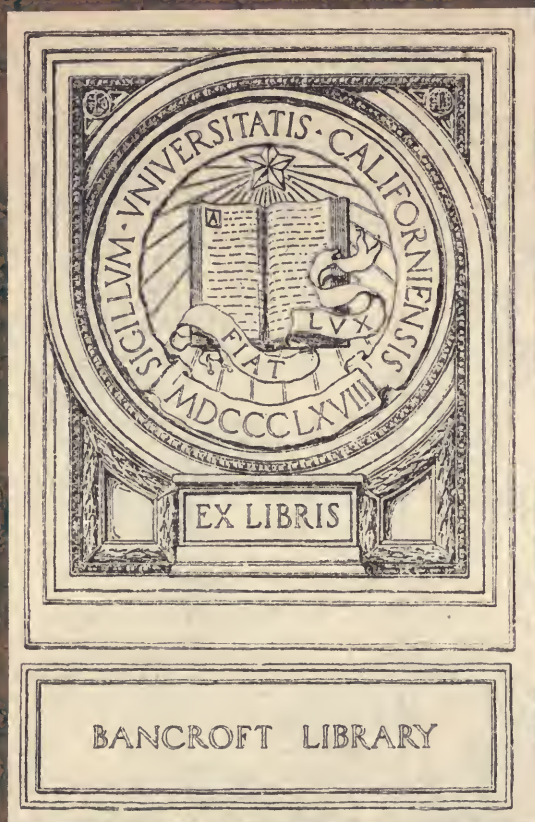


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*Curran, R. A. Reply to the chief. Northern Division.*



REPLY of  
Don VENUSTIANO CARRANZA  
to the  
Chief of the Northern Division

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The First Chief of the Constitutionalist Army, in charge of the  
Executive Power, to  
THE MEXICAN PEOPLE

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REFUTATION OF THE MANIFEST OF  
GENERAL FRANCISCO VILLA



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El Liberal, Mexico D. F., Sunday, October 25th, 1914.

I have deliberately allowed the Manifest written for General Villa in Chihuahua, and signed by him, to circulate freely, my object in so doing being that the people might become familiar with the reasons by which the authors of the "Manifest," pretend to justify this man's rebellion, in refusing to recognize me as First Chief of the Constitutional Army and in charge of the Executive Power of the Union. Although the false statements and contradictions in this document are apparent, I shall make it my duty to refute it with plain facts.

Villa's Manifest begins: "When the democratic government of Mr. Madero was overthrown, a great accomplishment of the revolutionary movement of 1910, the Mexicans again set out to conquer their freedom and their rights, thus proving to the Nation and to the whole world, that imposition in Mexico has been banished forever and that henceforth Mexicans will only be governed by rulers which they themselves have placed in power.

Evidently, General Villa forgets something that he should always remember to his shame: that on May 13th, 1911, immediately after the victory of the taking of Ciudad Juarez, General Villa and his partner, Pascual Orozco, seized the Provisional President of the Republic, Don Francisco I. Madero, who after he had managed to escape this first coup d'état, looked upon Villa with contempt and gave orders to shoot him, which orders were not carried out because as everyone knows Mr. Madero's goodness had no bounds.

It is not surprising therefore, that the man who attempted to overthrow by violence, the democratic government of Mr. Madero, now declares it a wonderful accomplishment of the revolutionary movement of 1910, and again resorts to violence, trying to impose upon the people a government, while he states that they will only respect governments which they themselves have placed in power."

Villa declares that "the Northern division, which had been the object of my political intrigues, fearing more than any of the other divisions that the revolutionary ideals would remain unaccomplished" proposed, with the concurrence of the chiefs of the Northeastern division in Torreon, to celebrate a Convention on a democratic basis, and he further states that I refused to accept this arrangement. The truth regarding the conferences of Torreon has never been told, but it ought to be. The meeting in Torreon was held at the suggestion of the Generals of the Northeastern division, and not of the Northern division, as Villa asserts, and it was done to find a way out of the difficulties brought on by one of the most grave disobediences of General Villa.

These are the facts: General Natera, who was attacking Zacatecas and had already taken possession of important positions in that locality, was urgently asking for reinforcements—I then gave orders to Villa to send to Zacatecas in all possible haste, five thousand or more men, under the command of whatever chief he might deem convenient. After offering many groundless excuses for not obeying this order, he finally replied that he would either go with all his forces, or

resign his command of the Northern division. My answer to him was to the effect that there was no cause for such an action on his part, and repeated my order to him, that he was to go to the assistance of General Natera, who found himself every moment in a more and more embarrassing position. Villa then presented his resignation, thinking that I would not accept it, which I did, but he nevertheless continued at the head of the Northern division, and after rebelling against me as First Chief, marched against Zacatecas.

The Generals of the Northeastern division seeing in the attitude of General Villa a serious danger to all concerned, they arranged with the Chiefs of the Northern division, to celebrate some conferences in the State of Tlaxcala. At these conferences, it was agreed to submit to my approval, certain propositions, and I must hereby state that I did not intervene or take any part whatsoever in these conferences, and therefore was not bound to accept its decisions. Nevertheless, when the different arrangements were put before me for my consideration, I accepted some points and rejected others. I agreed to have General Villa continue at the head of the Northern Division, furnishing provisions for his men, and letting him have the coal of the Coahuila coal-mines for his trains, and for the use of the railroad traffic in the region occupied by him. On the other hand, the Northern Division agreed to return to obedience and place itself under my orders—they also agreed to rescind their hold of the Railroads, and place them at the disposition of the Department of Comunicaciones (that is, the Railroads traversing the territory occupied by the Division of the North) also to hand over the National Treasury, the Customs of Ciudad Juarez, the Tax-Stamp Office, the Department of State and all the other federal offices which they had forcibly seized at the time they revolted, and to hand over to their rightful owners several millions dollars issued by the Constitutional Government and which they were unlawfully retaining in their power.

One of the clauses of the agreement which I did not accept, was that of conferring upon Villa the grade of General of Division, as I did not deem it justified to recompense an insubordination with a promotion. Another clause to which I would not agree was that providing that General Angeles (whom I had dismissed because I found him unworthy of the position entrusted to him) should resume his post as Assistant Secretary of War, with the understanding that immediately after his reinstatement, he would make his resignation. This did not seem to me to be a correct thing to do, it being too much like the proceedings of Diaz, and his sham pardons, proceedings which cannot be accepted by anyone with claims to self-respect.

Facts have been concealed and misrepresented, for the purpose of accusing me of having violated agreements, which could in no sort or manner be binding for me, and of having transgressed these same agreements by summoning a Junta of Generals and Governors of the States in the City of Mexico. This last mentioned, was an agreement which I had voluntarily entered into, and which I was therefore bound to comply with, which I did. But General Villa, who shields himself behind the Northern Division, and speaks always in the name of this Division, though he knows well that not all the Generals, Chiefs,

Officers and soldiers share his opinions, he asserts that "Since the Northern Division had lost its faith in the First Chief, they naturally could not put it in a Junta whose members were practically chosen by me, as it was I who had the power to confer the grade of General, and to appoint the Governors of the different States, which at all times would give me an assured majority.

Grievous and insulting accusations, these that Villa hurls against the Constitutionalist Army and its worthy chiefs! His desire to harm me is so great, that he audaciously makes the offense extensive to all his comrades-in-arms! Let General Villa know that, should I have the majority in that Junta, it would be because the majority of Constitutionalist Chiefs are true to their words, to themselves and to their ideals, and not because I have made them Generals. I also made Villa a General, and he betrayed his cause and did not fulfil his promise.

As First Chief of the Constitutionalist Army, I protest with more vigor than if I only were accused, against the charge of servility and abjection made by General Villa, to dishonor through history the names of all the generals who have followed me and the banner of legality. They are all, according to Villa, unworthy, he alone is honorable and deserving.

This majority of unconditional adherents and servile chiefs would be, if we are to believe Villa's Manifest, the support which would assist me "to remain in power an indefinite length of time, and to govern with a despotism never before known in the history of our country." Strange, is it not, that General Villa should still pretend not to know that the Plan of Guadalupe, accepted by him, imposed on me the obligation of assuming the Executive Power on entering the capital of the Republic, and of retaining it until the country was pacified, the elections taken place, and Constitutional order re-established. General Villa also pretends to be ignorant of the fact that the Plan of Guadalupe authorized me to fix a date for elections to take place, and that if, moved by a democratic spirit, I declined to make use of this authority, convoking instead a Junta of Generals and Governors of the States, it was with the idea that among other things they should also arrange this detail. I will also add that wishing to give the Junta entire liberty of action, I made to them my resignation of First Chief of the Constitutionalist Army and the Executive Power. I can find no more convincing and effective refutation of the calumnious charges made by General Villa against me, than the exposition of the facts I have just related. (It must be borne in mind that one of his charges is that of my planning to remain in power an indefinite length of time). General Villa can only answer my justification, by another calumny: that I instructed all the chiefs beforehand, not to accept my resignation, and that they, obeying my instructions, again put the executive power in my hands, not by a voluntary and patriotic act, which would have been to me a just source of pride and profound gratefulness—but that they did it—supposedly—through the abject servility which General Villa attributes to them.

But according to Villa, I have not only the intention of remaining indefinitely in power, but also of ruling for an indefinite length



of time, with a despotism never before equalled in the history of our country. Villa pretends to found his assertions on several reasons. He says I refused to accept the title of Provisional President, which rightfully pertained to me according to the Plan of Guadalupe, placing me under the restrictions of the Constitution, and that with second intention I retained the title of First Chief of the Constitutionalist Army and Chargé of the Executive Power. To this charge I will only say that: the title of Provisional President is in fact *understood* in the Plan of Guadalupe, but not clearly precised, and therefore I chose to adopt that which was clearly precised in the mentioned Plan, i. e. Chargé of the Executive Power. Moreover, the title of Provisional President could not place me, as Villa maintains, under Constitutional restrictions, as I could not very well be held to a Constitutional system which does not yet exist. The mere fact of my bearing the title of Provisional President could not put into effect the Constitution of the Republic.

Villa also charges me with having changed the form of the Constitutional oath. This charge is hardly worth a reply, it being such an insignificant detail when one considers that no public functionary or employe can be obliged to obey and enforce on others obedience to a Constitution which is not yet effective. Naturally the only thing that can be demanded just now of public fonctionnaires and employes, is the promise that they will work for the re-establishment of Constitutional order, in accordance with the Plan of Guadalupe, that being the final goal of the present lawful revolution. General Villa, who accuses me of such an insignificant detail as that of having changed the form of the oath: Did he not accept as a necessity brought on by the Revolution, the enforcement of the law of the 25th of January? Did he by chance obey the Constitution which he now so ardently defends, when he disposed of the haciendas in Chihuahua, when he has shot men without giving any consideration to Constitutional guarantees, when he has not even respected the decrees of the First Chief, when to end with, regardless of international policy and regardless of the Law which he so often invokes, he proceeded as he did in the case of the Englishman, Benton.

He accuses me of not having chosen my Cabinet in accordance to the regulations of the Constitution, because I have left the Secretaries of my Cabinet with the title of Superior Officials. Although this charge, like the preceding one, is almost too insignificant to be noticed, I will say that, outside of the fact that I am not obliged to act in accordance with Constitutional regulations which do not exist as yet, General Villa should know, and also those who have made his Manifest for him, that the offices of Cabinet Secretaries can be served by Assistant Secretaries or Superior Officials, as legally as by regular Secretaries.

General Villa says that "I assumed the three Constitutional Powers while I suppressed Judicial Authorities, and that I left the lives and interests of the Mexicans at the mercy of the Military Chiefs, without legal restrictions of any sort." This recourse was made necessary by the Revolution itself, and it could not be otherwise. The Plan of Guadalupe, which was seconded and maintained by General



Villa, clearly and finally denied recognition to the three powers: Executive, Legislative and Judicial. In these circumstances, brought about by the very nature of the revolution, the First Chief and the Governors of the States, with a view to catering to the most urgent needs of the public, have prescribed legislative regulations on the one hand, and on the other, have had to appoint temporary judicial authorities, giving them special faculties, for the protection of the lives and interests of the inhabitants of the country.

Unfortunately the lives and interests of Mexicans and foreign residents in the State of Chihuahua, have been exposed to danger in the hands of Villa, who being entirely devoid of the most elementary administrative notions, and completely ignorant of the meaning of order, is only a tool of the interests which surround him, for he has had the knack of bringing to his side many men who, consciously or unconsciously, were instrumental in bringing about Mr. Madero's ruin. Among his adherents is also a Federal General who has had a demoralizing influence on General Villa. This man, after accepting a certain commission in Europe for the usurper Huerta, came to me with credentials as to his honesty and uprightness, from some members of the Madero family.

I must also confirm a fact which however is well-known to everyone, and that is, that Villa, without previous authority from the Executive power, drove out all the Spaniards of the Laguna District, without taking the trouble to investigate whether these foreigners had in any way been implicated in the struggle we had had with the dictator. He also confiscated a great many of their properties, seizing the products of their farm-lands, without stopping to think of the international complications which would result, nor of the indemnifications the Government would have to pay for all the damages sustained by the foreigners.

I am also accused of having decreed Constitutional reforms "which only the Congress and House have the exclusive right to do" such as the suppression of the Territory of Quintana Roo. It is true that I decreed the incorporation of the Territory of Quintana Roo to the State of Yucatan, but this I did as a political and military measure, in order to strengthen the revolution in the case that Yucatan should support our cause, and this could not have been done without the incorporation of Quintana Roo, because as a Territory, it lacked sufficient importance. Moreover this measure, as all others of a similar nature taken by me during my administration, are only of a temporary character, for they are subject to the approval or rejection of the Legislative bodies, once Constitutional order is restored.

Lastly, General Villa accuses me of having "authorized the violation of rights given by the Constitution, among others, liberty of thought, allowing many of the Governors to abolish religious worship, and impose penalties for the observation of religious practices, which the law of the country authorizes, thus deeply wounding the religious sentiments of the people, by acts which civilization and the common law condemn, and all this only because of an exaggeration of the otherwise just resentment of the Constitutionals against the Catholic

Clergy, for having assisted in the military mutiny and supported the dictatorship.

If General Villa were only able to fathom the meaning of what they write for him to sign, he would not have placed himself in such an unfavorable light by making this accusation, it being he, who exaggerated this just resentment of the Constitutionals against the members of the Catholic clergy who supported the dictatorship, carrying his exaggeration to such an extreme that he caused great alarm and indignation in all classes of society. General Villa, who is now making friendly advances to the clergy with much outward respect for religion and its practices, used to drive out all the priests and close the churches, in every city and village that he took during his campaign. In Zacatecas he crowned his anti-religious frenzy (which so greatly contrasts to his Christian mildness of the present time) by driving out eleven priests of different Nationalities. Of this number, three were French, and their whereabouts are still unknown. This would be a good opportunity to remind General Villa of the warm congratulations he sent to General Antonio I. Villareal, Governor of Nuevo Leon, when Villareal issued a restrictive decree prohibiting the Catholic practice of confession. General Villa's congratulation was expressed in the following terms:

Chihuahua, July 29th, 1914.

General Antonio I. Villareal:

Please accept my most cordial and enthusiastic congratulations for your decree putting restrictions on the Clergy of the State which you govern with such ability. I am taking the necessary measures to follow your wise example, for like yourself, I am of the opinion that one of the greatest enemies of our freedom and progress, has been the corrupted clergy which for so long has repressed our people.

Kindest regards, etc.

General Francisco Villa.

Villa also finds fault in that I authorized the issue of Thirty Million Pesos, without funds to guarantee it. To this I can say that, it being urgently necessary to defray the expenses of the army and to give a uniform value to the paper money circulated by the Constitutionals, I resorted to the only way out of it: a new issue of paper money, which was to be used to replace the paper money issued during the civil war, by some of the Governors and Military Chiefs, to whom circumstances made it impossible for me to send them the necessary remittances to cover the actual wants of their soldiers. The paper of this new issue can be used to pay importation duties, all kinds of contributions, and to pay for the purchase of lands and real estate in the cities and in the country—and when peace is once more established, measures will be adopted to properly guarantee this money.

While on the subject of paper money, I will state that having authorized General Villa to issue Six Million Pesos with which to exchange the paper money issued by him and which was being counter-

feited on a big scale, he issued the Six Million as instructed, but did not exchange it gradually destroying the other issue, so that the six million previously issued staid in circulation, and six more million began to circulate. He has now issued in Chihuahua, without my authority, paper money amounting nearly to Thirty-Million, so that the Division under his command is costing the Nation: the millions just mentioned; about ten million more which headquarters gave him at different times for the maintaining of his forces; the proceeds of cotton, mineral, skins, cattle and cereal sales; the proceeds of the Railroads, compulsory contributions exacted by him, proceeds of lotteries and gambling houses licensed by him, etc. etc. If Villa has put any part of all this money to good uses, I know not, but I can state with all certainty that the armies of the Northeast and Northwest together, which outnumber Villa's more than twice over, have not spent anything like the enormous amounts inverted by Villa. This was one of the principal reasons I had, when I accepted Villa's resignation of the command of the Northern Division after the incident of Zacatecas. I wanted to impose discipline in that division, and to put a stop to this useless squandering of money by Villa, which in the end would have to be paid by the people.

Referring to the charge made against me for having suspended traffic between Aguascalientes and Zacatecas, I must here confirm my reasons for having done it. When General Obregon went to Chihuahua as per my instructions, to make efforts to settle peaceably the misunderstandings between General Arrieta, of the forces under my command, and General Calixto Contreras of the North, and the forces in Sonora, I was informed of what now everybody knows: that Villa tried to do away with General Obregon, who was his guest. Then, doing what I considered was my duty, I asked General Villa to give an explanation for his unseemly conduct towards General Obregon. Instead of giving the satisfaction demanded of him, Villa addressed me a message (which I have already made public) telling me that the Northern Division would not attend the Junta of Generals and Governors convoked by me, and that he did not recognize me any longer as "First Chief of the Republic." I must here call attention to the fact that this message disowning me both as Head of the Army and Chief Executive of the Union, was not the work of all the Generals of the Northern Division, most of them not having had any knowledge of same until after it had been sent by Villa. In the face of these facts, who is it that began to make trouble? Was it I, who sent General Obregon so that he might confer with Villa and solve the difficulties which had come up in the North—or was it Villa who took advantage of this occasion and almost did away with the Chief of the Northeastern Division, just because he remained loyal to me? In view of these unwarranted proceedings, I had to take the necessary precautions which the case required, and it was with this idea that I cut off all communications with the Northern Division.

The marked persistence with which the Manifest alludes to the Constitution, to the re-establishment of the Constitutional Government, and to the guarantee of a Supreme Law, etc. etc. is an evident proof that the politicians who wrote the Manifest for General Villa, and



Villa himself, far from understanding and wishing the realization of the aspirations of the Mexican people, are on the contrary reactionaries. An obvious proof of this is Villa's conciliatory attitude towards the Conservative element of the old régime, including ex-federal army officers protected by Felipe Angeles, and the clerical party, whose privileges Villa openly defends in his Manifest. A further proof of his reactionary spirit is his persistently repeated desire of inaugurating a Constitutional System of Government, before the revolution has had time to effect the social reforms demanded by the Nation. He insists on the immediate re-establishment of the Constitutional system, so that in the regular routine of the three Federal Powers, the radical and social reforms for whose prompt adoption we have been struggling, may be presented, studied, discussed and resolved. Useless to say that this would be a postponement of these reforms to such a far-off time, that the result would be null. Those who clamor for this are the enemies of the revolution.

It is true that the word "Constitutionalism" is engraved on the colors of our flag—it is true that our final aim is the re-establishment of a Constitutionalist order which will allow the normal operating of institutions which protect and warrant individual rights, and we shall not lay down our arms until we have obtained the sovereignty of the Law, and that is why we are proud to call ourselves Constitutionlists. But in order to obtain this end, it is necessary to satisfy the economical and social reforms which the people demand, putting in practice without loss of time and without legislative delays, the reforms which along these lines should be made.

General Villa closes his Manifest declaring that he will not accept the office of President or Vice-President, either provisional or Constitutional, of the Republic, which candidacies nobody has offered to him, and he adds that he has no ambition to rule. We shall soon be able to ascertain whether or not he has this ambition.

National Palace in Mexico City, 24th of October, 1914.

V. CARRANZA.

NOTE—*The extent of Sr. Carranza's understanding of the underlying motives which caused Pancho Villa to forsake the true cause of the people and join the banner of the Científicos and reactionaries, may be judged by his foreshadowing of certain events in Villa's camp. More than three months before Villa proclaimed himself as the "President of Mexico," Carranza predicted that that was the real aim and ambition of the shattered idol, Pancho Villa. He was fighting to realize his own personal whims and to obtain the control of the country for a number of wealthy reactionaries. He wanted to rule and dictate; he was aspiring to be the chief tyrant of the land beyond the Rio Grande and Sr. Carranza knew it better, perhaps, than any one else in Mexico. But that the people of the United States could not be fooled by his "Green Book" is evident by the editorial which appeared in the N. Y. Evening Sun, of January 7. Here is part of the editorial: "The narrative does not come down to the Aguascalientes convention, which Villa dominated and which first named Antonio Villareal and the Eulalio Gutierrez as provisional president. Villareal, like Obregon, is now in arms against Villa. It is the avoidance of all that happened since the Torreon conference that impairs the value of the Green Book as a partisan document."*



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